



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

2

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|

09/818,205

03/27/2001

Thomas H. Barrett JR.

11899.0250.NPUS00

2492

45607

7590

05/31/2007

HOWREY LLP

C/O IP DOCKETING DEPARTMENT

2941 FAIRVIEW PARK DRIVE SUITE 200

FALLS CHURCH, VA 22042

EXAMINER

BRUSCA, JOHN S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1631

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

05/31/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/818,205

Applicant(s)

BARRETT ET AL.

Examiner

John S. Brusca

Art Unit

1631

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 February 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15-49, 51-85 and 87-108 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 15-20 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-49, 51-85, 87-108 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office action contains new grounds of rejection under 35 U.S.C. 101 not necessitated by the applicant's amendment and is therefore a non-final Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The rejection of claims 1-108 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention in the Office action mailed 22 November 2006 is withdrawn in view of the amendment filed 23 February 2007.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 21-49, 51-85, and 87-108 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 21-49, 51-85, and 87-108 are drawn to a process. A statutory process must include a step of a physical transformation, or produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result (State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc. CAFC 47 USPQ2d 1596 (1998), AT&T Corp. v. Excel Communications Inc. (CAFC 50 USPQ2d 1447 (1999))). The instant claims do not result in a physical transformation, thus the Examiner must determine if the instant claims include a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

As noted in State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc. CAFC 47 USPQ2d 1596 (1998) below, the statutory category of the claimed subject matter is not relevant

Art Unit: 1631

to a determination of whether the claimed subject matter produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result:

The question of whether a claim encompasses statutory subject matter should not focus on *which* of the four categories of subject matter a claim is directed to 9-- process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter--but rather on the essential characteristics of the subject matter, in particular, its practical utility. Section 101 specifies that statutory subject matter must also satisfy the other "conditions and requirements" of Title 35, including novelty, nonobviousness, and adequacy of disclosure and notice. See *In re Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d 1354, 1359, 31 USPQ2d 1754, 1757-58 (Fed. Cir. 1994). For purpose of our analysis, as noted above, claim 1 is directed to a machine programmed with the Hub and Spoke software and admittedly produces a "useful, concrete, and tangible result." *Alappat*, 33 F.3d at 1544, 31 USPQ2d at 1557. This renders it statutory subject matter, even if the useful result is expressed in numbers, such as price, profit, percentage, cost, or loss.

In determining if the claimed subject matter produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result, the Examiner must determine each standard individually. For a claim to be "useful," the claim must produce a result that is specific, and substantial. For a claim to be "concrete," the process must have a result that is reproducible. For a claim to be "tangible," the process must produce a real world result. Furthermore, the claim must be limited only to statutory embodiments.

Claims 21-49, 51-85, and 87-108 do not produce a tangible result. A tangible result requires that the claim must set forth a practical application to produce a real-world result. Neither the method of independent claim 21, nor the apparatus of independent claims 37 and 57, nor the programs on media of independent claims 73 and 93 require that a result of the method is outputted to a user. Rather, the method of claim 21 requires that user instructions are generated, but not outputted to a user or stored or displayed in a user accessible fashion as suggested below. The apparatus of claim 37 does not have a limitation that the means for display in fact does

Art Unit: 1631

display a result. The apparatus of claim 57 does not have a limitation that the means for generating user instructions in fact does display the instructions or store the instructions in a user accessible fashion as suggested below. The program of claim 73 does not have a limitation that the result must be displayed or stored in a user accessible fashion as suggested below. The program of claim 93 does not have a limitation that the user instructions must be generated or stored in a user accessible fashion as suggested below. This rejection could be overcome by amendment of the claims to recite that a result of the method is outputted to a display or a memory or another computer on a network, or to a user, or by including a physical transformation.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 1-13 and 15-20 are allowable.

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John S. Brusca whose telephone number is 571 272-0714. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ram Shukla can be reached on 571-272-0735. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1631

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

John S. Brusca 25 May 2007

John S. Brusca
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1631

jsb